WHERE BROOKS GO SOFTLY

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WHERE BROOKS GO SOFTLY

BY

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS

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CHICAGO
CHARLES H. KERR AND COMPANY
1893

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TO

MY WIFE

"The wee cot and the cricket's chirr,
Love, and the glad sweet face of her."

James Whitcomb Riley.

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Where brooks go softly under trees
That shadow grasses pale
And temper every gale,
Come sit with me, my love;
I hear the turtledove
Cooing his modest mate to please—
So soft my tones shall be
In wooing thee.

LISTENING

If faith and hope and charity wait
The word of the Master to open the gate
That the River of Love may flow—
Dear Lord, let the word be said,
That the River of Love may thread
And leap and tumble
Where homes are humble,
May plead and chide
By the hall of pride,
And croon and droon where the weary keep
Wide-eyed and wan and know not sleep—
Ere the waiting die,
And the halting cry
"Too late! too late!
We knock at the gate
Without reply!"—
O thou Most High,—
The brown wood kneels by the sin-dry bed
Of the River of Love! Let the word be said.

THE SPIRIT OF SILENCE

From a mansion window in careless way
Were tossed the roses of yesterday.

But a breath of their fragrance drifted in
Where a sick man lay—worn, pale, and thin.

And the Spirit that builded, so long ago,
The wise king's temple awoke, and lo!

With never a sound would have stirred the thread
That grows in the wake of a spider's tread,

Stone, brick, and mortar were swept aside,
And the sick man strolled by a meadow wide,

O'er a low-hung ridge where the blue-joint tips
Reach up till they beat at the passer's hips.

A bluebird hopped on the topmost rail
Of a zigzag fence, and a distant quail

Called silvery clear: "More wet, more green!"
Though never a cloud in the sky is seen.

A drunken bobolink swayed and reeled
O'er the yellow sea of a barley-field;

Rang sweet the song of a joy-mad thrush;
And a wild rose turned, with a modest blush,

From the wooing bold of the cat-bird's drawl;
The air was stilled with the cricket's call;

And the man passed into the greenwood shade
While the Spirit of Silence the town re-made.

The tide of commerce roared over the bloom,
And they covered the face in the darkened room

Where the watchers wept, for the world is blind,
But the Spirit of Silence is wise and kind.

THE GOSPEL OF REST

I watched them jostling in eager strife—
(Locks of auburn and locks of gray)
Faces grown old with the cares of a life,
Faces grown old with a day.

And I paused to question, What better, O slave,
Fast chained to the loom, when the web is spun
And the cloth of your weaving scarce covers a grave—
What better when all is done?

Is it better to delve in the dust of trade,
Close hugging its gold with a miser's greed?
Or roam a barbarian free in the shade,
Unfettered by law or creed?

To plunge in the sea where the breakers roar,
Or sit on the sand where the wave sings low?
To trouble the river with noisy oar—
Or drift with its quiet flow?

Is it better to labor the long day through—
(The hope, elusive, is ne'er fulfilled)
Or loiter in shadow as dumb kine do,
Let the field be fallow or tilled?

The ark of wisdom may sometime keep
From the flood of sorrow, the man of care,
But Noahs will lie in the sun asleep,
And only the few be fair.

What better to burden the sportive brain
With subtle reasoning—dim the eyes
With constant seeking? Lo! yonder plain
Breathes joy to the smiling skies.

Go roam where the nightingale sings to its mate!
Where the moon spills silver in dusky pool!
The heart of the wanderer laughs at fate
If his feet with the dews be cool.

The beautiful butterfly, leaving its cell,
Leaps up to the sun from the sun-baked wall;
Get wings! If the worm may despise the shell,
What need for the man to crawl?

Is living a lesson so hard to learn
That we still are writing the task in tears?

Let the gray dove mourn and the lone owl yearn,
What are these to the song of the spheres?

I watched them jostling in eager strife—
(Locks of auburn and locks of gray)
Faces grown old with the cares of a life,
Faces grown old with a day,

And I paused to question, What better, O slave,
Fast chained to the loom, when the web is spun
And the cloth of your weaving scarce covers a grave—
What better when all is done?

THE SINGER WHOM NOBODY KNOWS

There's a dear little singer come out of the West,
A singer whom nobody knows;
The weary have only to listen and rest:—
If biting old Boreas blows
She pictures the gladness that Summer-time brings—
The violets under the snows,
Till the air is alive with the rustle of wings—
The singer whom nobody knows.

She lightens the burden of toiler opprest,
The singer whom nobody knows;
She coaxes despair from the wanderer's breast.
Her verse so melodious flows
It sweetens the speech of the slanderous tongue,
It chastens the prodigal's woes,
And soothes the poor bosom by perfidy wrung—
The singer whom nobody knows.

I would I might find her, this lyrical bee,
This singer whom nobody knows;
'Though plain as a sparrow, as charming to me
As the delicate breath of a rose.
Oh, precious her harvest, if so it be true
That the Spirit shall reap as it sows,
For she's bringing in lilies and casting out rue—
The singer whom nobody knows.

THE BETTER BIRTH

Two came to the sexton at early morn,
A peasant and servant of the king.
The servant: "Ring, sexton, a glad acclaim:
A son is born to his Majesty, ring!"
The peasant: "O sexton I pray you toll,
My boy is dead." And the graybeard smiled,
While he rang a chime for the care-freed soul,
And tolled for the king-born child.

THE SOUL OF LIFE IS LOVE

The world is as a sterile cliff;
  But love is like the dew
That falls upon it, and the moss,
  Like life, springs from the two.
    It creepeth o'er the barren stone
    Till all the place be verdant grown.

The world is as a blasted oak,
  But love is like the vine
That trails it o'er; its sunlit leaves,
  Like life, the two entwine.
    The trunk is green that erst was bare,
    And blossoms kiss it everywhere.

The world is as a clouded sea,
  But love is like the sun
That steals along the murky waves
  And brightens every one.
    O'er gloom is golden glory flung
    While sunbeams sport the waves among.

SWEET ROCK-A-BY

Rock-a-by baby, my pink and white cherub,
Droop little lids o'er the questioning eyes,
Angels will guard thee and sweeten thy slumber,
Rock-a-by, lullaby, pink and white prize.
Into the land of soft flowing water,
Fairies and flowers and slow waving bough,
Steal away baby, my pink and white rosy,
Mamma is rocking thee, sleep baby, now.

Mamma is rocking thee, lovingly rocking thee,
Rock-a-by baby, my sweet, rock-a-by.

Where will you wander, my pink and white beauty?
Is it to heaven in dreams you will stray?
'Twas only yesterday, pink and white rosy,
Only but yesterday you came away;
Now could I follow where soul-wings are wafting—
Follow thy dreaming, O what should I see?
Sleep, darling, sleep, and thy slumber over,
Bring back thy visions, my baby, to me.

Mamma is rocking thee, loving rockingly thee,
Rock-a-by baby, my sweet, rock-a-by.

LONG YEARS AGO

Long years ago, on arid ground,
Beside a rocky ledge, I found
  A tiny flower in bloom;
The desert, bleak and bare and gray,
All verdureless about us lay,
  Curled as the hand of doom
Had touched and shriveled it; alone
The flower bloomed above the stone—
  A star above a tomb.

To-night, inquisitive of mood,
I wandered where the demon brood
  Of want and hunger wait;
Where worth is sacrificed to might,
And wanton creatures curse the Light
  In hovels desolate;
Where ribald song and mocking jest,
And shifting gaze and sunken chest
  Proclaim the Fiend's estate.

And there in that discordant din,
The heavy air red-ribbed with sin,
  I found a toddling child
With face as pure and sweet and fair
As e'er was fanned by Heaven's air,
  As angel's undefiled.
"Lo! Thou art everywhere," I cried;
And love will bloom where love hath died,
  To cheer the bleakest wild.

HYMN TO COLUMBUS

Hail! hail! hail! Mighty navigator!
Hail! hail! hail! Prophet of the free!
Creed and kingdom crumbling fall,
Liberty enlightens all
Now because of thee—
Columbus! Columbus!
All because of thee.

Hail! hail! hail! Messenger of wisdom!
Hail! hail! hail! Worthy child of Fame!
Blare of trumpet, roll of drum—
Ho, the Nations crowding come
Chorusing thy name,
Columbus! Columbus!
Chorusing thy name.

THE DEAD CRŒSUS

He knew the scientific name
  Of every hot-house flow'r
And in their glass-walled company
  Would linger by the hour.
But where the lowly violet
  Bloomed bravely in the snow
He never came; its humble ways
  He did not care to know.

And now he's dead; of all his gold
  (So well he loved it, too,)
Not one poor penny's worth enclasp
  The fingers cold and blue.
The violet, sweet heaven's charge,
  Fills all the world beyond—
But not one hybrid blossoms there
  Of which he was so fond.

THE NEW PARSON

Yes, parson, you're studied in books, no doubt,
  But when the heart is a-longin' to pray,
  We don't consider what's best to say;
There's a feelin' behind just a-crowdin' it out.

Your preachin' has got us somehow unstrung;
  An' just when our feelin's beginin' to wake,
  Some furrin lingo creeps in t' break
The spell; *we feel* in our mother tongue.

We ain't a-hung'rin' for Latin an' Greek,
  What we want, parson, is reason an' truth
  The good old kind that we larned in youth;
An' a simple language we all can speak.

Your intentions is good, but your high-flown terms
  An' logic—no doubt o' the very best—
  Don't seem to lull us to peaceful rest,
We listen and feel we are ignorant worms.

The trout swims deep when the fishhawk calls;
  The thrush is oftenest found in the thorn;
  The scarecrow's better'n a rose in the corn;
An' the rainbow shines where the water falls.

A star is brighter seen through the trees,
  An' God is nearer in storm than sun;
  It tenders the heart an' it softens the tone
To feel that He with His own agrees;

That back of all trouble a Glorious Power
  Still leaves an' blossoms the bleak, bare grove;
  The vine climbs higher'n the tree for His love;
The same as we mortals in tryin' hour.

An' so believin' you can't think strange
  If we plod along in our simple way
  The little time that we have to stay,
An' don't go huntin' about for change.

Now don't be angered at what I've said.
  Go right on, parson, an' pray an' preach
  In a natural way an' a natural speech,
An' let the dead languages rest with the dead.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANEMONE

(Written in the Garden of the Gods near Manitou, Colorado, April 12, 1893.)

Sweet silver-stemmed anemone,
Fair delicate transparency,
Thy pale empurpled cup is filled
With nectar Hebe's trembling hand
From her now useless cup has spilled.
Poor Hebe, standing all aghast
Upon the sacred mountain side,
To see the gods contemptuous cast
From throne magnificent,

Swung wide
The gates, so long their grandeur kept
Close shut from eyes profane:

The tide
Of progress to oblivion swept
Thy people, Manitou, and thou,
O Spirit Great, must shrinking flee

From cave to cave of thine own hills.
There's none so poor to name thee now—
That name, alas, has come to be
The sacrilegious sign of trade.
What wonder frighted Hebe spills
This nectar that I quaff from thee,
Anemone, Anemone.

WHO SHALL JUDGE

God made the Universe and hurled
It forth to being, world on world.
As hopefully the inventive boy
Sets spinning his new-fashioned toy—
But with this difference—Nature wrought
Perfection from a perfect thought,
And as 'tis true the spinning top
Must, from its imperfections, stop,
So true the world, of perfect plan,
Will on forever. Dreaming man
Sees only by imperfect light—
Clear all things to the Infinite.
Poor, blind humanity must feel
Its way through life; and woe and weal,
E'er winding pathways, near allied,
Running forever side by side,
What wonder man so often strays
From *that* to *this* throughout his days!

To-day we deem ourselves sin-proof,
And from the wayward hold aloof—
To-morrow flounder deep in woes
While he we spurned straight onward goes.
The heart is truest, noblest, best,
That makes a brother's grief its guest;
That gives to famished souls a feast
And judgeth of its neighbor least.

The humble toiler trills along
And lightens labor with a song—
The worshipers of Mammon sneer
Because, mayhap, the poet's ear
Hath caught the harmonies that roll
In rythmic cadence round his soul,
Forgetful of the pen and brain
That gave the toiler his refrain.
And poet, gentle still of heart,
Sighs thoughtful, as he turns apart—
"I'd rather be a lark and sing
My song on free, empyreal wing,
O'er-happy if, in Sorrow's throng
One heart be lighter for the song,
Than tuneless lord of boastful birth
To banish Peace and throttle Mirth.

And if at eve my pulsing breast
To damp and chilly heath be prest,
And frowning skies my comfort blight,
I'll spring as gay at morning's light
And pour my rippling melody
Out o'er the field as full and free
As though a thousand fairies strove
To make my couch as warm as love."

Thus minds, as planets, circle 'round,
And truth 'twixt opposites is found—
Thus every being bears a part
To stir the blood in Nature's heart.
And, when at last this worldly guise
Shall vanish in the light of eyes
True, perfect, clear as He shall give,
'Twill be our destiny to live
Where heart by heart is clearly read,
And, howsoe'er our paths we tread,
So shall we sup of woe or bliss
In that world, as we love in this.
And He, of all the life and soul,
Must view His product onward roll
Forever. For the worlds that be
Swim in an everlasting sea.

STRENGTH OF SIMPLICITY

"Blow!" cried a lordly oak. "I brave
The winds from everywhere!"
A wood-flower in its shadow gave
A shiver of despair.
The tempest woke. The forest kings
Tost in the clouds their locks,
And through the skies, on wings of flame,
The thunder-gods contending came:—
The tempest slept. The flower looked up,
A rain drop shining in its cup—
The oak lay on the rocks.

OCTOBER

All day I have been in the woods alone,
  A day so quiet my soul could hear
The soul of the forest in pensive moan—
The soul of the forest in undertone,
  Bewailing the dying year.

In dim, soft shadow I roamed at will
  Where brooks, leaf-muffled and languid, flow.
So tensely tuned was the time, and still,
I could feel the heart of the forest thrill
  With th' presage of coming woe.

I could feel the heart of the forest beat
  In sorrow at loss of its beautiful crown;
While up from the grasses an odor sweet—
A faint, sweet odor arose to meet
  The leaves that were drifting down.

The bright green leaves of the summer, alas!
  Now brown, and amber, and red, and gold—

I fell with my face in the dying mass,
For I felt the wings of a spirit pass,
And the touch of a hand was cold—

The gruesome touch of a ghostly hand
And the sigh of a soul's despair!
For the foes of Life were abroad in the land,
The wings of Destruction the forest fann'd,
And Beauty was dying there.

With my face in the crimson leaves I wept,
(Dear leaves, so gay in the warm June weather!)
And into my bosom a longing crept,
That my soul with the soul of the leaves had kept
On into the great Forever.

For dear to me was the summer's bloom—
But the world cares little to understand;
To-night I sit in my lonely room,
With my lonely life, in the deepening gloom,
A withered leaf in my hand.

ALONE

The moon is waning in the sky
  (My steps are feeble grown and slow)
I see the lazy dragon-fly
On gaudy wing go sailing by—
  How chill the evening zephyrs grow.

I watch the brown leaves twirl and fall—
  Fall down and flee on Autumn's breath;
I hear the mourufful ring-dove's call,
The plover's cry, and each and all
  Bear solemn prophecies of death.

Oh could my heart have drunk the draught
  Vouchsafed to some while shone the day,
Death's cup I then had willing quaffed,
Aye, drank the very dregs and laughed
  To see him cheated of his prey.

Could I have had assurance sweet
  From but one soul in all the throng,

That in the future, weary feet,
Heavy with labor, should grow fleet
  Because my muse had sung one song!

But no, not mine this joy. My days
  (Some buds there are which never ope)
Have borne me in such darkened ways
That, though I ever strain my gaze
  For light, I still in darkness grope.

O Thou to whom I bend the knee,
  The stars and birds alike Thy care;
Touch Thou mine eyes that I may see.
Alone 'tis ever night, with Thee
  'Tis glorious morning everywhere.

AB EXTRA

"There are no poor—thank God!" I cried and turned
To see a burdened woman trembling fare,—
The strands of trouble silvering her hair—
Slow from the shop close hugging what she'd earned;
I saw the bundle that had been her task,
A million stitches pearled with anxious tears,
And all her pay,
Food for a day,
The putting forward just so far her fears,—
"Let us give thanks, He answereth all who ask!"

"Thanksgiving for Thy blessings manifold!"
So rang the anthem and the righteous bow'd
Within the church. Without, a blue-lipped crowd,
Half-clad, half-fed, stood shivering with cold.
"Give us to do your drudgery," they plead,
"That we may eat." "There is a store of bread."
The parson cried, "Give thanks, and prayer and
praise,

His sheep have come into their own at last,
Have fallen on the full, delightful days—"
"Give us to eat!" again the rabble cried,
The parson, softly—"For the poor He died."

"Thanksgiving!" cry the favored, "God is good!"
The hovels tremble with the groans for food.

DAWN AND DUSK

Where all-year skies are blue and bright,
  And pour the moonbeams golden
O'er flow'ring fields in floods of light—
  Where rambling houses olden
Throw wide their doors on spacious halls
  And roomy chimneys brighten,
In autumn days, the pictured walls,
  Where songs harmonious lighten
The dusky toiler's burden; where
  The mocking bird makes cheery
With every vagrant warbler's air,
  'Twas there I met my dearie.

The zephyrs through the nodding pines
  Were musically stealing,
The blossoms drifted from the vines
  That up the oaks were reeling;
There, while the thrush sang overhead,

Our tender vows we plighted—
And solemn words were softly said,
That our young lives united.

Long years we've journeyed side by side,
Aud all the hours are golden
As moonbeams that through portals wide,
All beautiful and silent glide
Into the mansion olden.

HAWAIIAN LOVE SONG

[The phrase upon which this poem turns is the most tender and eloquent expression of love and affection in the Hawaiian language.]

Our Northern tongue for battle,
For argument and trade,
But not for wooing looks of love
From eyes of doubting maid,
More sweet the story's uttered
In far away Hawaii,
Aloha nui loa
Aloha nui oe.

The Dane, the Celt, the Saxon,
Are lovers quite as true
As any e'er the tropic sun
To dreamy roundness drew;
But none can voice so sweetly
Love's glad triumphant joy,
As this untaught Hawaiian,
Aloha nui oe.

Pale autumn pensive lingers
Along the crimson wood,
Or bends to weep above the spot
Where late the poppy stood,
And sighs as sighs the lover
For one in far Hawaii,
Aloha nui loa,
Aloha nui oe.

The mother rocking softly
Her first-born, crooning low
The quaint, unwritten song of love
That babes and mothers know,
Drifts where the palms are sighing,
In far away Hawaii,
Aloha nui loa,
Aloha nui oe.

Sweet phrase, all unacquainted
With sound of care or strife,
Like love untutored come to speech
You bubble into life!
O, dusky-eyed Koolele,
O lithe-limbed blue-eyed boy,
Aloha nui loa,
Aloha nui oe.

O, COME WITH ME

O come with me to the wild-wood free
  Where the south wind fetterless blows;
Where the nymphs peep out with a saucy pout
  From the tips of the budding rose.
Where the zephyrs play on their scented way,
  And the boughs with their tones are rife,
Where voices I know will whisper us low
  From the soul of their secret life.

O come with me where the thrush goes mad
  With joy of the summer's glow,
And the squirrel calls from the orchard walls,
  And the time has never a no.

Where the brook leaps up to the leaf-formed cup,
  And the mandrake nods in the shade,
Where the blackberries peep from the coverts deep,
  And the wild bees' hoard is made.
From the mad town come where the partridge drum

Goes echoing down the glen.
Let the crowd go by—it is moan and sigh
And curse in the haunts of men.

Then come with me where the thrush goes mad
With joy of the summer's glow,
Where the squirrel calls from the orchard walls,
And the time has never a no.

THE SILENT LAND

God's language tells us we are One,
And somewhere, 'twixt the stars and sun,
The Vale of Peace in quiet lies,
Where human hearts grow truly wise;
Where gliding spirits feed the mind
With truth; where souls are not confined
To narrow paths, but roam at will
O'er mead and mountain, heath and hill;
In fair Tacita's waters lave,
And, living, rest as in the grave.
A land wherein the woeful word
That blinds the thought is never heard,
But soul with soul hath converse sweet,
In language soundless, full, complete.
Who enters there leaves words behind,
For mind, illumined, reads the mind.
The gleaming walls that skirt it round
Have never heard the voice of sound;

Yet pæans swell and anthems roll
Harmonious—music of the soul.
To live will be to understand
When we have gained the Silent Land.

IN DIFFERENT MEASURE

"Laugh and the world laughs with you."—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

O, sing to the priestess of unrestrained pleasure,
Laugh till the walls of the palace resound!
Dainty shoon beat out the rhythmical measure,
Wine glasses tinkle and leap at the sound!
Crown her with roses, voluptuous red ones,
Bring in the bacchanals, slaughter the calf—
Poverty's wailing its dying and dead ones?
Teach it, dear poetess, teach it to laugh.

Long have we waited her muse to enroll us
Angels of mercy the foremost and best:
Others for ages refused to extol us—
Singing forever the poor and oppressed.
Homer to Burns! They did naught but abuse us,
Flailing with wit our pretentions to chaff,
She is the first to redeem us and choose us
The theme for a song—to delight in our laugh.

Laugh and the world will laugh with you! Be
cheery;
Thrust back that sob on your womanish heart!
Others have hovels as empty and dreary,
Others have babes 'neath the Juggernaut cart—
There is no treachery, knavery, sorrow,
Throw down the crutches and discard the staff,
Put by your hunger, 'twill keep till to-morrow,
Be deaf to the wailing of others and laugh.

POOR OLD WORLD

Poor old world, thy sun's declining ;
  'Twixt thy two extremes a door
Darkling shuts—within the dining,
  And without the starving poor.
Bankrupt all! We've banished pleasure,
  Passion rules the hearts of men—
In the palace hoarding treasure
  Cursing treasure in the den.

Fled the saintly triple Graces,
  Fled their gentle sister Peace;
Gold has flattened human faces
  By the weight of its increase.
Every lofty thought is smothered,
  Dead is Friendship's generous glow—
See the race by Freedom mothered
  Unto Mammon bowing low.

JUNE

Most welcome, thou of lavish hand!
A subtle fragrance fills the land;
The sea is silver, and the strand
A wave of gold;
The fruit peeps forth on every hand,
And flowers unfold.

The verdant hills are proud to wear
Thy blushing favors, and declare
Thy purpled richness. Everywhere
Is glory spread,
And tree and shrub and earth and air
To beauty wed.

THE FALLEN LEAF

From its brothers gay on the boughs at play—
  Like the tear of a hidden grief
O'er the cheek of care—through the lambent air
  Slow-drifted an idle leaf.

To be caught at last by the brook that passed
  And sang to the boughs above,
Where it rose and fell with the dip and swell,
  Like a brooch at the throat of love.

Then out on the stream, with a saucy gleam,
  It was swept by the current down
Where the mists of gray from the rapids' play
  Are pied with the rocks of brown.

Oh! the leaves that fall at the frost-king's call,
  They are mourned as the dead may be,
But the one astray—how the home-hearts pray
  For that one on the Somewhere Sea.

LIBERTY BELL AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

Grand old bell, thy earlier mission but to voice on
Sabbath morning—
As an angel's fingers pressed thee,
As an angel's wings caressed thee,
Softly chiming from the steeple,
"Rest ye, rest ye, O my people!"
In mellifluous tones and tender with an undertone
of warning,—
Changed thy speech, as all men know,
On that morning long ago,
When thy stern majestic ring
Bade defiance to a king.

In the streets are gathered thousands waiting for
the message grand
That shall loose their bonds and make them freemen
in a freeman's land,—
That shall by a single motion
Send defiance o'er the ocean,
Signal ships are outward pointed,

Signal ships that homeward run,
That a prince by priest anointed
Is but man when all is done.

Brave men breathless stand below thee, pale of
cheek but stern of brow,
Praying for th' proclamation—moments are as
hours now,
See! the hand uplifted wavers,
Falls—the bellman straining there,
Sends the song in rhythmic quavers
Out upon the dancing air,
"They have signed it, O my people!"
Cries the bell from out the steeple,
"Independence! Independence! Liberty is newly
crowned!"
Chorus all the waiting thousands till the old bell's
voice is drowned.

But that glorious proclamation,
Swiftly everywhere it ran
And demanded of each nation
Equal rights for every man.

How the spirit of Columbia into every heart has
grown

Best is told by yon White City—symbolizing all
that's good.
East and West are come together—there is neither
pole nor zone,
There is neither slave nor monarch; but where late
the willow stood,
Stands the wonder of the ages. Stroke the old bell's
rusty side,
Right has triumphed and before her cowers Tyr-
anny and Pride.

UNREWARDED

To sing, that seemed his one delight,
  Betrayed of man, he sang for men,
O'erfilled with gladness if he might
  But win the sad to smile again;
Poor in those things the mean adore,
  Rich in those things the gods revere,
He scattered largess from his store—
  The world repaid him with a sneer.

Ah, bright the face of Hope appears
  To those by sad mischance distrest—
A sun that rainbows falling tears,
  A moon that swims in Trouble's breast.
But cruel fortune left him blind—
  She gave the cross, but kept the crown—
He wrote his name upon the wind
  And weighted it with thistledown.

THE COMING DAY

You do not see the tears fall,
O scoffers
With coffers
In which you lock your hearts;
You do not see the mists that lie
Before the ever-yearning eye
When peace from life departs.

You do not see the blood flow
O blind ones,
Unkind ones,
Who hoard the shining dust;
You do not know the grief they feel
Who through a night of anguish kneel
Praying to keep their trust.

Yet they are all about you,
The falling ones
The calling ones,

Here, there, they fainting lie;
O when at last your steps are stayed
And you are low beside them laid,
Can you for mercy cry?

If e'er the the burden-bearing
Shall cease to pray,
Beware the day,
Sweet princes, boasting much!
The lion ravened of her young
Is gentler than the human stung
Beyond Hope's healing touch.

CLOTHES WORSHIP

The world will crack the devil o'er the pate
If, dressed in rags, he peep above the gate—
But let the velvet hide his cloven hoof,
He finds a welcome under every roof.

THE GOOD IN EVERYTHING

I ain't jes' got my bearin's on these Socialistic facts,
An' I'm summat undecided 'bout the scheme o' Single Tax,
But all year round I'm pullin' strong with any man ur creed
'At gits a crowd together fur a feller-bein's need.
I ain't sot on no theury, nur any special plan
To bring about redemption. T' me the average man
Is puz'lin' es a gol' mine—so many slants an' shifts—
Ain't like to strike it payin' till y've sunk a dozen drifts;
But one thing now I know es well es any man a-talkin',
The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd a-walkin'.

Take my ole mare—o' humble birth—she'd never captur' Bonner,
But fleet Maud S., pert—speedy tew—with all her gewgaws on her,
'Ud never pull me half so safe. I take more comfort with her
A joggin' through the pastur' lan's an' long the shaded river,
Than he can git a-flyin' o'er a road o' powdered mortar
An' feelin' 'at his nag don't pass es many es she'd orter—
But both on 'em ha' got their pints thar ain't no sulks nur balkin'—
The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd a-walkin'.

Thar's few on us 'll edge t' square, fur Natur' runs t' bevels,
But if there is a dearth o' saints thar ain't so many devils.
The truth is, minor strains o' gu'd run through the most o' cre'tur's—
We ain't all han'sum, but we've all got some redeemin' fe'tur's;

An' when y' come across a man 'et seems supremely bad,
Jes' fin' the stone 'et's shuttin' out the sunshine frum the lad,
An' if you len' a kin'ly han' t' roll that stone away,
You'll see a shoot come peepin' up t' greet th' cheerin' day,
An' spreadin' out its tiny han's, an' by an' by 't'll bloom,
An' when the crucifiers cum they'll fin' an empty tomb.
Now Paul was sich a feller, mos' cruel, hard an' col'.
He'd titles, too, an' honors, an' a cheriot o' gol',
But when he turned he giv' his life fur Him he'd been a mockin'—
The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd a-walkin'.

Las' week I seed a workin'man, es po'r es po'r cu'd be,
With nothin' to pay taxes on, except 'twas misery,
Put down his dinner-pail an' turn to cheer an' mil'ly chide
A tipsy, broken 'ristocrat who talked o' suicide;

An' yiste'day I seed the man thet poor mechanic saved,
All shinin' sleek in broadcloth, jes' newly primp'd an' shaved,
Go down a muddy alleyway whar' lay a sodden wight,
An' bear him tenderly beyon' the shoutin' rabble's sight,
An' that is why I'm moved t' say, for all the gloomy talkin',
The bad ain't all in kerriges, nur all the gu'd a-walking.

So while on one side Selfishness is keepin' what it gets,
An' on the other Envy raves an' curses, fumes an' frets,
Th' quiet people sweep along th' road a-tween th' two,
A gettin' gentler all th' time because o' good they do,
A gettin' nearer, nearer yet t' that delightful time
When ev'ry man 'll seek th' true in ev'ry lan' an' clime,

When Ekal Rights 'll compass all the surface o' th' yearth,
An' man'll rank fur what he is despite o' wealth ur birth—
Thar won't be any lan'lord then behin' th' tenant stalkin'
An' gu'd 'll ride on ev'ry side, with Satan, maybe, walkin'.

THE PESSIMIST

Before him sweeps the cavalcade of Space;
Behind him tramps the cavalry of Time;
And 'twixt the two, with hopeless, aging face,
He struggles through a *chapparral* of crime.

A SUMMER PICTURE

In curving silken hammock hung,
She slowly back and forward swung;
Her left hand tost above her head,
And in her right the book she read,
Or seemed to read; yet each white lid,
Blue-veined and heavy fringed, half hid
Her brown-black eyes, whose dreamy light
Shone like a half-seen star at night,
When veil-like mist o'erhangs the air—
And told her thoughts were otherwhere.

Her wealth of yellow tresses caught—
By silver bangles, Venice-wrought—
Back from her brow, full, broad and low
And trackless as new-fallen snow,
Swept sloping downward, wave on wave,
To hide the foam-white shoulders, save
Where, 'twixt dividing, golden strands,
They gleamed like pearls half hid in sands.

One dainty, slippered foot peeped out—
Its arching instep bound about
With narrow bands of black and gold—
From underneath the foam-like fold
Of fluffy gown—greensward beneath,
The trees above a giant wreath;
She seemed not born of earthly strife,
But marble starting into life.

UNDER THE BLOSSOMS

A Mid-May evening, calm, serene;
  The stars assembling faintly smiled
On undulating fields of green,
  On woods where plum and apple wild,
Their every bough a globe of bloom,
  With fragrant odors filled the air,
On stream that in the softened gloom
  Of woodland shade sang sweetly there.

With figure bent and falt'ring pace,
  Up from the vale a pilgrim came;
Pale Want had pinched and limned his face,
  And Sin, Regret and Passion's flame
Had so consumed him that he moved
As one who, having Charon proved,
  Was come again to stroll among
The rich, full beauties of the plain.
  'Twas like a glorious anthem sung,
Wherein is one discordant strain.

Just underneath the blushing bough
He knelt beside the brook, to cool
His fevered throat and throbbing brow.
"Dear spot," he murmured, "worse than fool
Was I, to leave so fair a place
For city's glare and blaze and roar.
O Innocence, thy gentle face
Shall smile upon me nevermore!"

He paused. Among the tender leaves
The straying Zephyr sadly sighed.
"And is there any heart that grieves
To-night for me?" he sudden cried.
"Ah, God!" At that great word he bowed
His head until the grasses swept
His sunken cheek, and sobbed aloud,
And prayer broke from him while he wept.

THE PRAYER

"Sweet Spirit! Universal All!
Pure source of gentleness and love!
Who hearest e'en the sparrow call,
I, to the verge of madness drove,
Hard ridden by a devil horde
Of scourging fiends, at last to Thee,

Though late, I come; Thou art the Lord—
Oh, be Thou merciful to me.

"About my head the tempests drive,
My feet are set in sinking sands,
Within me evils live and thrive,
To tear the good with cruel hands.
On Virtue I have shut the door;
My heart is lead, O Galilee!
Thy love, Thy favor I implore—
Dear Lord, be merciful to me."

. . . . . .

He slept. Above him sang a thrush;
The twilight deepened into night,
And, in the still and holy hush,
The blossoms, delicately bright,
Came slowly down from branch and bough,
In fragrant clouds came down to hide
The shame of sin and wreck of pride.

They found him there at mornings light,
All wrapped in robes of pink and white—
And peace was on his brow.

THE HAND THAT HOLDS THE PLOW

All about the corn is waving
Emerald green with tips of gold;
Amber wheat-fields sea-like laving
Shores of hedge-row round them roll'd.
'Neath yon poplars tall and stately,
Robed in shimmering silver leaves,
From his farm-house door sedately,
Counts the lord his coming sheaves.
Mark, as evening shadows lengthen,
How he sends delighted eye,
O'er the upland's wealth of treasure,
Where the shaven meadows lie.
Nature weaves her fairest garlands
Round the sunburned reaper's brow,
And the Ship of State is guided
By the hand that holds the plow.

See his offspring troop about him,
Strong of limb and brown of cheek,

Reared to trust and never doubt him,
Labor taught from week to week.
Within doors the housewife tripping
Back and forth in thoughtful part,
Loving hopes her steps out-stripping,
Born within her mother-heart,
Till the snowy cloth is laden
With the food her hands prepared—
Home-instructed while a maiden—
Richer feast was never shared.

Nature weaves her fairest garlands
Round the sunburned reaper's brow,
And the Ship of State is guided
By the hand that holds the plow.

Can there grow—in city splendor—
Walled and sunless, rank with sin,
Souls so broad they would defend, or
Die, their country's good to win?
Hero minds need diff'rent feeding—
Hills and valleys, sky and sun,
Such will rise, their country needing,
Rise true patriots every one.
Slavery never can enthrall them,
Gold is serf to Right the king,

Dragon Greed cannot appal them,
They have heard the river sing.
Nature weaves her fairest garlands
Round the sunburned reaper's brow,
And the Ship of State is guided
By the hand that holds the plow.

RETRIBUTION

At last you are home from the carnival? I—
By my faith, 'tis a regal head—
Have been pondering here, as the hours went by,
On the fleshless hand and the rayless eye.—
  List, madam, our child is dead.

Is dead, I tell you—asleep, asleep.
  Keep silence, and wake her not!
I watched her going, but did not weep,
And the devils came out of the shade to peep
  At the one bright crimson spot—

You would see our darling? 'Twill be as well.
  So, lay the jewels aside,
And all these shimmering robes that tell
Of the stately measure and cadent swell,
  Of the sinuous sweep and glide

Of the amorous waltz. Am I harsh? And thou,
  Oh, gentle and loving mind!
With thy jeweled throat and thy painted brow—

And have you reason to chide me now
  With cruelty? I unkind!

It likes me better, this simple dress;
  What a small, small throat, my love!
Do you shrink from my touches of tenderness?
Time was you were hungry for each caress,
  And cooed in return like a dove.

We will go together, and you may weep—
  Your breath—are my fingers steel?—
O'er that silent couch with its snow-white heap
Of marble beauty in breathless sleep,—
  What, Love! you falter and reel!

So well I loved her, *our* child, my dear—
  What say you? Believe, you true?
And she was so pretty I had a fear
The world might claim her and leave me here
  Alone when she older grew.

And I rocked her to sleep in my shielding arms
  (Did you dance with the count to-night?)
I rocked her, and whispered: The world's alarms
Shall never come near you, nor shall your charms
  Grow pale in a lover's sight.

And I said I would keep her, the bloom on her
cheeks—
There, still as the child you've grown,
And white as the snow on the mountain peaks,
Soft by our little one—ha! who speaks?
I have had my way with my own.

EASTER LILIES

What though you build cloud-high the wall,
  What though the sword you constant wield!
All kingdoms, monarchies shall fall
Because of these—and over all
  Shall stand the lilies of the field.

TO A WOUNDED BIRD

Poor little warbler! harmless thing
That late on buoyant, sportive wing,
High up among the clouds, did'st sing
Thy glad refrain,
Now helpless at my feet you fling,
A slave to pain.

Thy voice, that erst, so full and clear,
Was wont my lonely heart to cheer,
Now shrill with pain and piteous fear—
Cheering no more—
Wins for itself but Pity's tear,
And grieves me sore.

Poor songster! not thy voice alone
From troubled breast sends up its moan,
Thine not the only pleading tone
Of breaking heart—
So man must ever sigh and groan
E'en from the start.

'Tis thus the mortal that has found
Thee, blasted by a cruel wound,
Gropes ever darkly 'round and 'round,
With mind untaught,
Striving with many a useless bound
A flight of thought.

So must he ever panting lie,
Far, far below Hope's glowing sky,
To which he fain would quickly fly
In loving trust,
But ever with a feeble cry
Falls in the dust.

BETTER THAN GOLD

Cast your bread upon the water,
  Pleading, hungry at your feet;
High or humble, king or cotter,—
  Charity's returns are sweet.
By a word that's fitly spoken,
  Howe'er simple it may be,
Oft a chain of evil's broken
  And a fettered slave is free.
    Cast your bread upon the waters,
      Tossing sea or dimpled burn,—
    These are all His sons and daughters,—
      Give! nor question the return.

Every tear that's stayed from falling
  Is a diamond for your crown;
O the ceaseless, ceaseless calling
  Of the dear ones trampled down!
But for those whose strength is given

To the shielding of the weak,
Storms are still, the clouds are riven,
Zephyrs chant and sunbeams speak.
Cast your bread upon the waters,
Frowning sea or dimpled burn—
These are all His sons and daughters,
Give! nor question the return.

Every stream of kindness flowing
Stays some feet that sin-ward roam;
Every lamp of mercy glowing
Guides some wand'ring brother home;
Nature opes her veins to nourish
Vines of truth where'er they run,
And a thousand blossoms flourish,
Pressing in the track of one.
Cast your bread upon the waters,
Moaning sea or dimpled burn—
These are all His sons and daughters,—
Give! nor question the return.

Every youth that's upward pointed
By the riper mind of age,—
Every age by youth anointed,
Beautifies a barren page.

Patient faith has ever wrought her
Triumphs through the gentle heart—
Cast your bread upon the water,
Heroism's noblest part.
Cast your bread upon the waters,
Moaning sea or dimpled burn,
These are all His sons and daughters,—
Give! nor question the return.

HE WROTE FOR ALL

"The world is cruel, careless, cold,"
I sighed, "and cares for naught but gold!
Why should my troubled pages plead
A brother's woe—a brother's need!"

"My song is drowned in Mammon's roar,"
(I flung my pen upon the floor)
"The hand that Fortune stoops to bless
Must crush the buds of tenderness."

My toddling wee one put the pen
Into my trembling hand again,
And, clambering upon my knee,
Said, archly: "Papa, wite for me."

I wrote—a homely, childish tale
Of hope and love—no pensive wail
Of others' wrongs—but what her smile
Had wakened in my heart the while.

And when the ink had scarcely dried,
I heard the song on every side;
It filled the land from sea to sea,
While thousands cried, "He wrote for me."

SISTERS OF MERCY

Theirs is the holy beauty that in the lily dwells,
Or sways the purple clover when chime the distant bells;
The sweet, unspoken beauty, too delicate to trace,
That hideth in the heart to light the plainest human face.

LOVE'S COMPLETENESS

They met 'neath an oak in a sheltered glade,
On a fair May morning,—the bright-eyed maid

And sturdy ploughman—through brown and tan,
Her gaze sank into the soul of the man.

She loved him, and he,—in the fields alone
He lingered wherever a flow'r was blown

To whisper his secret,—the birds all knew,
And sang the story so clear and true

That his great heart thrilled in his bosom grand,
Lest others should hear them and understand.

They met, and there at the maiden's feet,
A wild rose nestled secure and sweet.

He plucked the blossom with tender care,
And twining the stem in her golden hair,

Low whispered: "'Tis crowned with a gem of dew,
It shall gleam in your tresses, a crown for you,

The queen of all flow'rs, from the violet
That looks from your eyes, to the blooms which
fret

And boughs of the oak where the woodbine clings,
And the wild dove nests and the red-bird sings.

Then down from a branch, as he tremulous spoke,
Slow drifted a leaf from the listening oak,—

Till swaying and shifting, like mystical wand,
It rested at last in the maiden's hand.

Quickly she clasped it, to answer him—"See!
The oak of the forest is most like thee.

From your lips come words, as the leaves that fall,
That are rich with comfort and cheer for all.

The tree to the hurricane offers its breast,
That the weak in its bosom may shelter and rest,

It broadens its shade in the noontide heat,
And peaceful comfort envelops its feet.

The modest blossom that decks my braid
Came fearless forth in its cooling shade.

Nay, look where the trunk by the storm is riven,
To the weaker vines is a foothold given,

And mount they gaily in loving strife,
To broader and sweeter and sunnier life.

Though man may harshly these faults condemn,
They are rounds in the ladder of hope to them.

The flower is fragile, but strong the tree,
The oak for you, and the rose for me.

Spring went and came with its bud and bloom,
With sunshine and song and the flash of plume.

The rich full Autumn turned gold and red
The great green wreath 'round the old oak's head.

But ever again when the soft May air
Is kissing the lips of the roses fair,

In the quiet shade of the oak, these twain
That glad spring morning live over again.

And youthful faces about them bend,
And youthful voices in harmony blend.

There are tongues a-prattle and pattering feet,
The oak, the rose with the vines complete.

FORSAKEN

O shadows of Erebus, hide me;
  The day hath no pleasure for me.
Nor human nor angel may guide me;
  I drift on an under-world sea.
Shut in by the mountains of Reason,
  Storm-beaten by Reason's disdain—
A cycle declined to a season,
  An unbroken winter of pain.

Shut in by a custom unshaken,
  Shut out from the sweetness of home;
From visions of joy I awaken,
  To battle with demon and gnome.
My soul as a bird of the morning,
  Went soaring and singing thy name;
Now, stripped for thy selfish adorning,
  It creeps back in darkness and shame.

The hands that so gently caress thee
  Hold lashes to scourge me; the lips

That trouble sweet heaven to bless thee
  Curse me to the verge of eclipse.
God pity them, dearest! God pity!
  For myself, I shall finish the jest
With a meaningless laugh through the city,
  To sleep in the River of Rest.

THE BETTER YEAR

Two radiant stars in the long ago
  Shone fair on a world with the war aflame,
And men grew gentler for Sappho's woe,
  And nobler because of a Roman's fame.

Yet brute-blood lingered, and nobles heard
  The shriek of anguish without a sigh,
And the veins of matron and maiden stirred
  And thrilled with pleasure to see men die.

How pale thy passion, O singer sweet!
  How dim thy glory, O man of pride!
In the love-light born where the two worlds meet,
  At the tomb of the Nazarene, crucified!

Are hands still crimson with life's dear bloom?
  Does love still bleed in the press of strife?
Do sun-beams struggle through clouds of gloom
  That rise from the furnace of sordid life?

Behold the selfish turned strangely just,
The just grown gentle; the kind, sincere!
While fruit displaces the hardened crust
In the softened glow of a better year.

THE OUTCASTS

High in an attic, grim and scant,
A ragged creature lonely sat—
His face was limned with pain and want;
At once he cried, "Begone! Avaunt!"
As o'er the threshold crept a cat.

"Stay, stranger, do not drive me hence?
I pray thee, list my tale of woe,
I am too poor to give offense,
And stripped of every finer sense,
I scarce fear either word or blow.

"It was not always so; before
They turned me out the streets to roam,
I always found an open door.
Alas, when we grow old and poor,
That we should be without a home!

"The children loved to stroke my back,
When I was sleek, and round, and fat—
Watch the sparks fly and hear them crack,

And call me pretty puss. Alack,
I'm now but a neglected cat!

"Once, when a bell the children found—
A tiny, tinkling bell—they tied
It with a pretty ribbon round
My throat, and at its merry sound
They laughed and laughed until they cried.

"But now whene'er my form they spy
With ready hand they fling the bat,
And I am forced for life to fly;
I've lost a foot—an ear—an eye:
Alas, I am a sorry cat!"

"Poor creature, you have come at last,
To one who feels your woe—like you,
By all the harsh, cold world outcast,
To dream of an embittered past
That proved all false he once deemed true.

"Come, outcast, ragged as you are,
Take half my crust: 'tis hard and dry,
And all I have—but you shall share;
And, while I live, so shall you fare
Till one or both of us shall die."

SNOW VIOLETS

O bravely the violets bloom in the snow:
The chill winds of March that are hurrying so
Seem tempted to linger—regretfully go
From the fragrant sweet violets sprung from the snow.

Man's work, not his strength, but his weakness reveals:
O'er-drunken with knowledge humanity reels
By the fountains of wisdom. The lowliest flower
Surpasses the wonderful: castle and tower,
Carved marble, oiled canvass, how poorly they show
Where the brave little violets bloom in the snow.

THE FALSE NOTE

Does a strain of exultation
  Steal, unbidden, to the tone
Voicing sympathy and comfort,
  When another's hope is flown?
Does regret come slyly plucking
  At the sleeve, while we rejoice
When another has succeeded
  By his deed, or pen, or voice?
Hail the blemish in the blossom!
  Hail the discord in the tune!
We should come to hate the roses
  Were the year a round of June.

APRIL—EVENING

The virgin leaves in friendly play,
The thrush a-tremble with his lay,
  The snipe's dull boom, the plover's call,
  The robin's treble winding through it all.

THE POET

A poet is—why, naught but this:
A throb'ing instrument, whose strain,
When joyous, is most full of pain,
When painful, rich in bliss.
A fettered bird that longs to fly,
Yet, freed, droops nerveless, idly by,
Nor spreads its wings till, chain'd once more,
It beats its life out in a vain attempt to soar.

A poet is—why, who can tell?
Companion of sweet Nature's joy,
Fate's idle plaything, Passion's toy,
Combined of heav'n and hell.
He pores above the Book of Man,
Its close-writ pages each to scan,
Learns every thought to feel and state,
And rides o'er darkling cares and woes elate.

This is a poet; more than this,
He knows the grandeur heroes feel

When surging on with naked steel
Where death's hot missiles hiss;
With them he scales the battlements
Through battle-smoke and carnage dense,
With blood-dyed blade and batter'd shield,
Till waves their flag triumphant o'er the field.

This is the poet, ay! and more;
His fate it is to hold and bound
A soul that, like a sea of sound,
Breaks on a farthest shore.
Through darkness of the length'nd night
To labor with a Heav'n-born might
Distilling dewdrops, pure and clear,
That diamond-like touch up the worldly ear.

ON AN OLD DOOR-STONE AT YALE

What devious paths they since have trod,
  The feet that wore this granite thin;
But leveled forest, broken sod
And temples leaping up to God
  Tell where their ways have been.

'TIS NOBLE TO LABOR

'Tis noble to labor, but low to slave,
We should cleave our task as the ship the wave,
Not falter and flounder, as through a wood
Grown rank with briars; half understood
The thing appals us; well learned it seems
As smoothly pleasant as childhood's dreams.
We joy in the progress each day we make,
And labor is sweet for its own dear sake.

The nigardly miser we may despise,
But rational saving is good and wise;
The independent is he who can
Grant favors, nor ask them of any man.
What pleasure the poor to assist, but when
The needy are those whom we love; ah then
The clink of silver and gold's bright shine
Bring joy to the giver that's quite divine.

I KNOW

I know that joy is everywhere,
  That trooping pleasures fill the earth,
For all day long before my door
  The children sport in noisy mirth.

I know that Charity is queen,
  And kindness leavens more and more,
For gates are open in the wall
  That once divided rich and poor.

I am not wise to answer those
  Who call me fool; but this I know,
That all the world is leal and true,
  Because the ones I love are so.

AN AUTUMN TRAGEDY

Mid-afternoon. All overhead
  A trackless, blue expanse,
Along the stream the sumac red
  Defiant rears his lance.
The partridge in the hollows drum,
  The bannered maples gleam,
And naked cotton-wood and plum
  Hang ghostly o'er the stream.

The spring brook, through an avenue
  Of yellowed beach and elm,
Bears gayly on, with ants for crew—
  A cricket at the helm—
A broad, frost-curled, catalpa leaf,
  Its prow with silver crossed—
Two pebbles form a deadly reef,
  The shipwrecked crew is lost.

HOPE

When the weight of sorrow presses on the weary,
weary heart;
When the future we have trusted fails to do its
promised part
As it sweeps into the present—when we shrink,
deceived, betrayed,
With the fruit of Expectation turning bitter in
the shade
Of the Tree of Knowledge reaching, with its elon-
gated bough,
Through the shadow of the ages to the stern and
staring now;
When the long-desired fulfillment, clasped at last in
our embrace,
Proves a chill and bloodless nothing with a stolid,
painted face;
When the sinking sky is darkened with the gloom-
ings of despair,

Not a single star to brighten—only blackness
everywhere—
Comes a breeze so gently blowing, comes a warm
and tender light,
Stealing up the eastern heaven, and Despair and
sable Night
Slowly fade away together—Morning trips along
the slope,
And the spirit's day breaks newly with the dawn-
ing light of Hope.

A LEGEND OF ESQUIMAU BAY

O bright was the morning! All nature adorning,
The sunbeams of summer shone free,
When Mary came down o'er the sands from the town
To the damp golden rim o' the sea.

For her Jamie to-day would go sailing away,
To a country is strange to her ken,
And through a whole year she must sorrow and fear
And wait for his coming again.

Now she reaches the dock—in his blue sailor smock
A gay ribboned cap on his head,
With his hands stretchin' out—there be men all about,
But she falls in his arms like the dead.

The face now at rest on his high-heaving breast,
It is white as the April day snow;

Jamie sobs out a cry: "Help men, et will die!"
As gently he sways to and fro.

And the twice helpless men mutter over again,
"Et will die, pretty lass, thet et will!"
And down the rough cheeks of each one as he speaks
Flows many a heart-touching rill.

But they stand like a ship that is moored in the slip,
With hearts, but no knowledge to do,
Till at last Mary sighs, slowly opens her eyes,
And looks round on the pitying crew.

Then the blood to her face comes in hurrying race,
As she hides her wet cheeks on the breast
Of Jamie, while they to a man turn away
And point to the sea's foaming crest.

The farewells are passed, and the good ship at last
Has sailed from the sheltering quay,
And wringing her hands Mary comes o'er the sands,
Her face turning still to the sea.

A year has gone by, and the summer draws nigh,
The sunlight is warm on the bay,

But no other ship's been where the good ship was seen
That bore the brave sailor away.

The night it was dark and the tempest blew stark
With the mad waters pounding the shore,
"Mither, list!" Mary said, as she turned in her bed,
"There's some un wha knocks at the door.

"Ther's some 'un wha knocks an a ship on the rocks,
I can hear, mither, breakin' her sides!"
"T'sleep, child, na fear, 'tis the winds that y'hear
And the high rollin' sweep o' the tides!"

"There's some 'un wha calls, mither, some 'un wha calls,
It is Jamie's voice, mither, I know!"
"Na, child, dinna min', 'tis the gale in the pine
'Et lifts on the crag there below!"

The tempest grew still as she spoke, on the sill
A half-sound of hurrying feet,
The barred door swung wide, and with still, ghostly stride
Came Jamie, his Mary to greet.

His face was as grave as the curve of a wave,
  The seaweed was wound in his hair,
His jacket was gray with the sand and the spray,
  And the sea-brine that dripped from it there.

The mother grew white and still with affright,
  But Mary sighed, "Jamie, 'tis he!"
No word Jamie spake, but her hands he did take
  And pointed away to the sea.

Her eyes to his own all so trustfully shone,
  While slowly she rose from the bed,
And with him she past through the door—holding
    fast
  To the hand of the wraith of her dead.

Again the storm grew, louder yet the winds blew,
  The door slowly swung to its place—
And in shivering fright the poor mother all night
  Cowered there with close covered face.

The morning came fair with a soft gentle air,
  But sorrow was over the town,
For the good ship Labrocks on the sharp cruel
    rocks,
  In the storm of the night had gone down.

And there were a score of brave men or more
That the waves to the shallows had borne;
And many a Kate must weep for her mate
And many a mother must mourn.

Where Mary had dwelt the poor mother knelt
In a corner with meaningless stare,
"Christ, Jesu!" cried she, pointing out to the sea,
"My Mary and Jamie are there."

Now by Esquimau Bay, so the village folk say,
When at night the storm lashes the sea,
Their wraiths hand in hand may be seen on the strand
As loving as lovers may be.

MAY

We heard not a sound of their marshaling feet,
  Saw never the gleam of a spear,
Till their tents stood saucily fronting each street,
  And the army of blossoms is here.

MARCH

Pale autumn moves, with gentle tread
And quiet air, among the dead;
  March whips the sullen sky to tears,
  And lo! the violet appears.

WISDOM

Wouldst thou gather wisdom? Go
Where the gentle waters flow,
Where the flowers and the trees
Sway in converse with the breeze;
Where around the mountain's poll
Silence thunders to the soul.
Mysteries from two concealed
Oft to him are clear revealed
Who, in solitude, alone,
Lingers where a flow'r is blown,
Feels the music, as it passes,
Of the marshal-hearted grasses
Pressing forward out of night
Into liberty and light.
Forth in evening's calm, to view
Heav'n's star-lighted vault of blue;
Note the bull-bat's noiseless flight
Through the silver gray of night;

List the crickets piping slip
From the clover; watch the dip
Of the sword of Dian, prest
Slow into the mountain's breast,
Where he rears him, stern and grim,
On the Occidental rim.
Knowledge weaves of earthly things,
Wisdom mounts on eagle wings,
Wins the Parcæ's magic wand,
And peers into the world's beyond.

ONLY

Free from all care in his boyish play,
A face as the sunlight, cheering and gay;
The pride of a mother whose arms entwine—
Only a sip of his father's wine.

A growing knowledge with manhood's strength,
A mind far-reaching in wisdom's length;
A smile for the merry, for the grieving a tear—
Only a glass of the foaming beer.

Shining in circles of mirth and song,
A love of the right, and a hatred of wrong;
A friend to be sought for whose friendship is gain—
Only a toast in the bright champagne.

In the manly face a line of care,
Some silver threads in the dark-brown hair;
A cloud on the brow, in the eye, alas!
Only an occasional social glass.

A figure bent in the noon of life,
A weeping mother, a pleading wife;
A weakened brain, and a mind grown numb—
Only a drink of the fi'ry rum.

A squalid room in an attic high,
A pain-wrought moan, a pitiful cry;
A bundle of rags 'neath the rafter's gloom—
Only a dying drunkard's home.

A coffin of pine, unfinished and rude,
A widowed mother with starving brood;
A lonely ride o'er the rattling pave—
Only a pauper's nameless grave.

POEMS OF FRIENDSHIP AND AFFECTION

HANDSOMEST OF ALL

True, you may not call her handsome—
  May not even deem her fair;
In her cheeks no roses blossom;
  Gold-gleams flash not in her hair;
Smoother brows there are, and whiter,
  Eyes that hold a gayer light—
Neither are her fingers taper
  Nor her hands as lilies white;
In her step there's nothing fawn-like,
  Low and tremulous her tones—
But far dearer her possessions,
  Sweeter still the charm she owns.
There are others worth admiring,
  Handsome if you will—but she
Is my mother, tender, loving,
  Handsomest of all to me.

'Round her brow there winds a garland
  Of a thousand answered prayers;

In her hand she bears the lilies
Of a thousand lightened cares;
Every tress that Time has silvered
By an angel's kiss is blest;
And her cheeks have burned their roses
On the love-fires in her breast.
With the strength her toils have wasted
Manly hearts beat high to-day,
Storing for her future comfort,
Pouring gladness in her way.
There are others worth admiring,
Handsome if you will—but she
Is my mother—tender, loving,
Handsomest of all to me.

In this gentle, trustful clinging
I can read the far-off past—
See myself as timid, falt'ring,
To her firmness anchored fast.
How she soothed each childish sorrow,
Smoothed each wrinkle from my brow,
Kissed away the tears and cheered me,
Even as I cheer her now.
Life is but a half-spelled sentence
Scattered o'er a blotted page,

But the heart that's true remembers
  Age is youth and youth is age.
There are others worth admiring,
  Handsome if you will—but she
Is my mother—tender, loving,
  Handsomest of all to me.

EPISTLE TO OPIE READ

Hail! goddess of the yellow braid!
The Queen of press and measure!
Now are the rural toils repaid
With heaps of shining treasure.

Ye desk-worn! throw your pens aside,
Discard the puzzling book,
And come where skies are blue and wide,
And thought is like the brook
That sings along the hazel slope
And leaps among the rocks.
The woods! The fields! Renew your hope,
And the luster in your locks!

Come where the salmon graceful glide,
Their golden sides a-quiver—
Or where the stubborn pike divide
The swiftly flowing river.
Come where the partridge-thunder peals,

And mallards part the rushes
As o'er the bridge, with creaking wheels,
The loaded wagon crushes.

Come where the quail prophetic speaks,
And where the saffron boughs
The playful jay with sapphire streaks;
Come where the hungry plows
Devour the stubble, flashing bright
At every turn; and swains
Who strip the golden ears delight
The fields with jocund strains.

Along the stream the peaceful kine
Industrious crop the heath,
Their full distended bellies shine,
Their glossy sides beneath.
While round the sullen monarch glow'rs,
His front all sable curled,
With mutt'rings fierce proclaims his pow'rs,
Then challenges the world.

My friend, to your creative mind
These scenes I know are dear,
For them your converse I resigned,

For you I sing them here;
Nor do all rural subjects bear
The rude untutored part,
Full oft the shy reserve they wear
Conceals a trusty heart.

Where blossoms 'broider every path,
And climbing roses grace
The cottage doorway, spite and wrath
Find thorny resting-place.
Here e'en the ever-boding crow
Croaks in a smoother way,
And blackbirds seem each noon to know
A still more tuneful lay.

At early morn to meet the sun
My joyful way I take—
How musical the brooks that run
To leap into the lake!
The timid plovers veering rise
With supplicating cry—
The pointed pinion swiftly plies
Along the purpling sky.

Now fair amidst his shining force

The god of Day appears.
Swift up the sky he holds his course;
Speed forth the gleaming spears,
Till every dusky shape is slain
That steads the course of night,
And swims the woodland, hill and plain,
In warm, refulgent light.

When midway in the tender blue
The sun all shadows cheer,
I seek the wood and there review
The books of Hope and Fear,
The hoarding squirrel shrilly calls,
"The winter comes; lay by!"
"Enjoy," cries every leaf that falls,
"Decay and death are nigh."

The gray dove now, forsaken bird,
Bemoans its absent mate;
Now winds the heavy-uddered herd
Slow through the pasture gate.
The careful herdsman stands to count,
And ere his task be done,
High up a rocky ledge I mount
To view the setting sun.

The budding Spring is gay with song.
The summer boasts her charms,
And when old Winter roars along
How grand are his alarms!
But Autumn! Life's dividing line—
The round year's richest part!
You've many an abler pen than mine,
But no more faithful heart.

LOOK UP

[To Mrs. Lou M. Wilson.]

Art weary, love, despondent, weak?
  Look up! the skies are thine;
What though to-day be cold and bleak,
  The morrow's sun will shine.
Come, take my hand, 'tis firm and strong,
  'Twill give you hope and cheer—
What if the way be dark and long,
  If so that Love be near?

Look forward—never backward—heart;
  The past comes not again.
The sunbeams on the mountain dart
  Though clouds o'erhang the plain.
Up higher yet! The risk is great?
  The prize is what you will;
The faithful sing at Heaven's gate,
  The indolent are still.

THE KEELEY LEAGUE BADGE

[Respectfully dedicated to Samuel E. Moore of Pittsburg, Pa., father of the Keeley League. The club met first in the blacksmith shop of Wm. Wesse of Dwight, hence the emblem of the horseshoe in the badge.]

How pleasing the strains of the harp or piano,
How stirring the call of the bugle or drum;
And hopeful the song of the robin in spring-time,
When trees are a-bud and the violets come;
How dreamful the sound of the rain on the clover,
In stillness that follows Jove's threatening roll;
But the music that hurries my blood and awakens
The sweetest and holiest chords in my soul,
    Is the chink, chink, chink,
    And the clink, clink, clink,
Where the forge-flame ebbs and flows,
    And I pause whene'er
    On the air I hear
The ring of the blacksmith's blows,
As he turns the shoe in whose form I see
The symbol of all that is dear to me.

Now firmly the links of affection are welded,
I know those again I had not thought to know;
O, peace of the soul and a constant sweet quiet,
Beyond all the power of the craftiest foe
To darken or trouble or hinder or ruffle;
Not sighing of Sappho, or piping of Pan,
Hold half so sweet measure to stir me or thrill me,
As the strokes of this brawny-armed, soot-powdered man,
With his chink, chink, chink,
And his clink, clink, clink,
Where the forge-flame ebbs and flows,
And I pause whene'er
On the air I hear
The ring of the blacksmiths blows,
As he turns the shoe in whose form I see
The symbol of all that is dear to me.

WHITTIER

I saw the moaning ocean turn
  To leave the weeping land,
And then come laughing back again,
  A white wreath in its hand.

I saw the full moon creep behind
  A cloud that hid its light,
To re-appear high up above,
  A hundred-fold more bright.

I saw a herdsman lead afar
  His panting, thirsty flocks,
I saw the waters burst for him
  In fullness from the rocks.

I saw the negro scourged and bound,
  I heard the hammer fall,
And then the Nation's mighty voice:
  "Be free, my children, all!"

He trod where only prophets tread;
  Put these sad symbols by,
And bring them forth when one is dead—
  Our Whittier cannot die.

GRANT—A REQUIEM

Though Sierra's crags enfold me
  Where to-night I sit alone;
Though no human tongue hath told me,
  Yet I know that he is gone.

For the winds that erst were sighing
  In the swaying boughs o'erhead,
"He is dying! He is dying!"
  Now are moaning, "He is dead!"

Till the clouds, symphonious roaring,
  Clasp the shiv'ring mountain round,
Deep into the canyons pouring
  Monodies of mournful sound.

Quick, recurrent fires go reeling
  Through the sable skies and light
Earth's tumultuous breast, revealing
  All the storm's majestic might.

And behold; with aspect solemn,
  High above, the god of war
Leading forth an endless column
  Toward th' one unclouded star.

Soldier spirits long have slumbered,
  Deaf to bugle, fife and drum,
Waiting in their graves unnumbered,
  Waiting till the chief should come.

On they sweep, a line unbroken,
  Through the sky with steady tread—
Though no human tongue hath spoken,
  Thus I know that Grant is dead.

SOLITUDE

[Respectfully dedicated to Leslie E. Keeley, M. D., LL. D.]

The black-winged tempest of the night
  Its wrathful course had run,
And, like a tired child, the sea
  Slept in the noon-day sun.

Far shoreward stretched the moor-lands wide,
  Marked by a single oak—
The Storm King's fiery saber smote
  And killed it at a stroke.

A barren beach swept to the right
  In long, low-swirling drifts,
While gray and cold upon the left
  Uprose the beetling cliffs.

Before the sea so hushed and still,
  It only moved to sigh,

And overhead the boundless blue
Of an unclouded sky.

The mellow sunlight on the land,
The sunlight on the wave.
The sea a-beat against the cliff
Like Love against a grave.

On jutting crag a fish-hawk plumed
His steel-blue, glassy coat,
Then headlong plunged into the wave,
The death-cry in his throat,—

A cry that echoed far and wide;
But one who soundly slept
Where shelving beach and waters met,
Unbroken silence kept.

The sunlight in her clinging robe,
The sunlight in her hair,
The waters lisping at her feet
Held all of life was there.

No eye to weep, no voice to mourn,
No touch of loving hand;
All waxen-white and still she lay
Alone upon the sand.

The timid Zephyr nearer crept,
And one, more kind and bold,
Upraised her hair and veiled her face
With half its wealth of gold.

Alone she lay who yesterday
Was half a city's pride,
The queen of speechless solitude
And desolation's bride.

THE SIRE OF EIGHT

[To my friend LeRoy Armstrong]

A lonely bachelor I came
  Where homelike gardens fringe the town,
And by a cozy hearthstone flame
  With loving friend I sat me down.

Not forty, and eight times a sire,
  Not forty, and nine voices sweet
The blessed morning hymn to choir,
  The evening coming-home to greet.

Four clinging girls, four sturdy boys,
  Each dearer than the Ophir mine,
Not forty, and prospective joys
  Already multiplied by nine.

The rose that bends beside his door,
  While but a single rose to me,

Ten times for him it blooms and fades,
  Ere drifting to th' Eternal Sea.

Ten hearts to throb with one's success,
  Ten heads to bow with grief of one;
Oh, blessed wealth of tenderness!
  Oh, awful poverty of none!

Some lives are like a riven drum,
  Some glad as nesting robbin's mate—
A lonely bachelor I come,
  To sit beside the sire of eight.

TO JOHN ALBRO

He found my muse—a wayward child,
  In pleasure romping where she would;
A free-limbed daughter of the wild,
  Sans ribbon, bodice, shoon or hood,
And led her by persuasive art
  To quiet ways and comely gown—
Until (the wild-wood in her heart)
  She moves demurely in the town.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE OLD HOMESTEAD

From low-hung clouds of leaden gray
  The fluffy flakes came down
Till every shrub and bush was gay
  In bridal wreath and gown;
What time the moon, of gibbous form,
  Clear in the heavens stood
Above the farm-house, sheltered warm
  By the embow'ring wood.

About the valley, lily fair,
  The hills voluptuous swell,
A lonely poplar here and there
  Keeps jealous sentinel;
The spring brook, with a merry smile,
  Flings in old Winter's face,
Then gaily glints beyond the stile
  And skips his cold embrace.

The old folk by the chimney nook
  Think on the ones who roam,

And lamps from every window look
To light the absent home;
Home! where they first, wee toddlers, crept
Along the oaken floor,
Where childhood laughed till manhood wept
A parting at the door.

Of all the brood but one remains
To cheer the parent nest,
Support their age and soothe their pains—
The youngest, dearest, best
Of all the precious, treasured seven
Who in their hearts abide—
Though some are here and some in heaven—
God keep him by their side.

They come! The venerable pair,
With kisses, tears and smiles,
Give welcome to the strong and fair
Who've scorned dividing miles
To meet beneath the homestead roof;
Grandchildren trooping round
In noisy play, without reproof,
Make all the house resound.

Now sinks the memory of care
In Pleasure's golden sea;
If Ned and Bess their favors share
In shadow, where can be
The harm? Shall cousins never kiss?
The game of forfeits, ho!
Decorum! such an hour as this
Rules her its mortal foe.

Five-summer Edna fairy tales
With cousin Ralph would share;
Maturely eight, his soul regales
Itself on giant fare,
Which Dick and Bird, ancients of ten,
Demurely smile to hear,
Half wishing they were young again
To hold such trifles dear.

But when the sturdy Welshman Ben,
By years of service proved,
Brings in a log two modern men
Not easily had moved,
And casts it crashing to the flames,
Each to the chimney hies
And hastily an ember names
To watch it till it dies.

Thus Yuletide hours all gaily fly
  Away on swallow wings,
The merry laughter, swelling high,
  Is hushed as midnight rings;
And round the fire, in varied groups,
  Are hung the chubby hose;
Good-night! and hopeful childhood troops
  To innocent repose.

O childhood! sinless as the flakes
  That kiss the clouds good-by!
The memory of thee awakes
  The suppliant's dearest sigh;
And wore I here a monarch's crown
  Above these thinning locks,
How gladly would I cast it down
  To be a child in frocks.

THE MARTYR PRIEST

[In memory of Father Damien.]

I stand uncovered by a grave
  Wherein a hero molds;
Yet never battle-ax nor stave
His hand embraced, nor weapon, save
  The touch that kindness holds.

No sculptured column marks the place,
  But here by weeds o'ergrown,
With patient care I faintly trace,
"The savior of our stricken race."
  Carved in a cross of stone.

What loving fingers held the knife
  That spelled this ragged line?
Though they had every soil to wife
I'd give a twelvemonth of my life
  To clasp them once in mine.

For one beneath this ivy sleeps
The world shall longer know
Than any name the New World keeps,
Than any e'er from Alpine steeps
Rang o'er a conquered foe.

His act pales all heroic deeds
Though twenty Homers sung them;
The isle Unclean! Alas the needs
Of those on whom that vampire feeds!
Serene he moved among them,

And braved a death which e'en in thought
Appalls our every sense;
Day after day in patience wrought
For those whose slightest touch is fraught
With woful pestilence.

The blue-rimmed ocean shut him in
From all his nobler kind;
Abandoned in that Isle of Sin,
By horrors haunted, there to win
To hope the hopeless mind.

The ships that sailed in silence by
Must e'er anew have stirred

The memories which could not die,
The joys of home, love's tender sigh,
  The greeting smile and word.

There could he sit with trusty friends
  At close of winter day,
And join the cheer that converse lends
To social mirth when wisdom bends
  To wit's delightful play—

If so he dreamed none ever knew;
  The ties of earth were riven—
Priest, brother, nurse, he loved and drew
His charge to love him and renew
  Their faith and hope in Heaven.

No marble marks his resting place,
  By ivy overgrown;
But here with patient care I trace,
"The savior of our stricken race,"
  Cut in a cross of stone.

JOHN M'CULLOUGH'S VIRGINIUS

Grand as the eagle in soaring flight
Sweeping the mountain's brow;
Grand as Ocean when storm-mad night
Hurls wave on wave till they're cushed and white;
Grand as the prairie whose boundless sweep
Is giant rhythm, or still as sleep
On the brow of death. What pow'r hadst thou
To wake our frenzy or win our tears!
"Virginia! Virginia!" I hear thee now,
Though still thy voice as the Roman years.

THE TRAVELER'S NIGHT AT HOME

[Dedicated to the Commercial Travelers of America.]

Gray twilight draws her curtains adown the windowed west,
Each object, shadow mantled, half seen is, half is guessed,
The stars o'erhead are blinking, as newly waked from sleep,
And drowsily regretting the vigil they must keep;
Sounds have a sharp distinctness the sun-hours never know,
And seem upon the senses to riper fullness grow,
While trembles through the valley, like thunder after rain,
The steady, solemn rumble of the near approaching train.

The over-crowded pavement, where lamps un-lidded glare,

Presents the old-time picture—Joy walking with
Despair;
But where the suburbs nestle beyond the city gates,
The people quiet gather about their cheerful grates,
In neat and cosy parlors which breathe a restful air
That wakes the heart to rapture is felt no other
where.
Ah! fortune-favored mortals, with never need to
roam,
You may not know how fondly the traveler loves
his home.

The wife is tripping, tripping with anxious, thought-
ful haste,
To see the many knick-knacks in pleasing order
placed;
Here dressing-gown and slippers rest, with inviting
look,
Beside the favored arm-chair rolled into pleasant
nook
Before the polished hearth-stone—the foot-stool
ready stands—
The very air seems softened by touch of loving
hands,

And mother-eyes are beaming with an expectant light
Which says, "O time the sweetest, my traveler comes tonight!"

Within the curtained window his cherished offspring twain,
Their eager, hopeful faces close pressed against the pane,
Peer out into the darkness, their swelling hearts abeat
With keen anticipation, each anxious first to greet
The music of his foot-fall—At once he's at the door,
And joyful cries are ringing, while kisses by the score
His bearded face o'ershower as he enclasps their forms
And lifts them to his bosom with strong but gentle arms.

She, shunning demonstration, which oft proclaims deceit,
Her eyes like melting jewels, gives welcome true and sweet,
Takes down the clinging children, his wrappings lays aside,

Then modestly precedes him, with pardonable pride,
To where his comforts wait him—beguiles him of his trip—
Removes the laid-off garments, sets by the "battered grip,"
Till ere he scarce perceives it, so deft and dextrous she,
He's slippered, gowned and seated, a child upon each knee.

With merry word she leaves them, by household duties pressed;
The curly heads confidingly are pillowed on his breast;
Their silken tresses stroking, he, in the blazing grate,
Sees both his darlings growing to man and maid's estate;
The mystic veil is lifted that hides the future years,
And on his pensive vision a fair To Be appears.
Swift up the mount of progress advancing they are seen.
And white-browed Honor leads them and Virtue walks between.

About the table gathered, each lowly bows the head,
While humbly and devoutly the homely grace is said;
No long-drawn invocation to tire the Throne of Grace,
Nor abject self-abasement with pride writ on its face;
But praise and service rendered for life and health preserved;
This plain thanksgiving over, the waiting meal is served;
No feast, however costly, by lords and ladies shared,
E'er gave more grateful pleasure than this by love prepared.

The little heads are nodding, the bright eyes strive in vain
To look "I am not sleepy" yet close and close again,
Till sweet goodnights are tendered and mamma leads away.
But drifting down the stillness, he hears his Robbie say,
"Forever and Forever," then halt before amen,
"Dear Jesus don't let papa go away from us again."

His face is calm and tranquil again she has appeared,
But she can note the diamonds that glisten in his beard.

Their eyes have sudden meeting, no need for further speech,
She nestles close beside him, each takes the hand of each,
Against his rugged shoulder, she lays her golden tresses,
And they are lost in dreaming of timid, first caresses,
When she a bashful maiden and he an awkward youth—
She glances shyly upward, both catch the pleasant truth
And laugh in awkward chorus—but still the rich perfume
Of dewy summer evening is floating through the room.

God's blessing on the fireside, whatever lot surrounds,
That to the holy music of wedlock still resounds!
Where confidence unbounded and love communion hold,

Where children's voices mingle;—let misers hoard
their gold,
Ambitious statesmen wrangle; within this hal-
lowed light
Dissension never wanders and greed can never
blight.
Oh! picture all the raptures beneath yon starry
dome,
The holiest are clustered around the Night at
Home.

JAMES

[Respectfully dedicated to Mr. P.W. Snowhook whose unostentatious kindness has cheered so many despairing men to honest endeavor.]

Name's Jim, Jim Burke.
Am I lookin' fur work?
Can't say 'et I am,
Ain't much uv a lamb—
Got any employ?
Don't want it, old boy,
Leastwise not now—
How?
Sit down, ye shall hear—
Ho, waiter, s'm beer—
Can ye see in the shade
The mark 'et uz made
By the ball an' chain?—
The Gov'ment rein
'S been drawed on me
An' ye must agree

'T thar's reason enough
Why I should be tough
But none et all
Why I should crawl
In the wake uv a clown,
My back bowed down
By a load o' brick,—
I'd do et 'an quick
But whar's the use;
I kin stan, abuse
A durned sight better when
et's deserved.
Uv course, I hev served
Time,
Not in this clime,
But the mark is here,
Burned deep. Mebbe queer,
But you are the fust—
Here waiter's your dust,—
What'll ye have? Don't drink!
Well, here's what I think
O' you 'ristocrat bloods
With yer trim-cut duds
An' yer milk-sop ways,

I would smash y' all
As I smash this glass—
H'm, let that pass.
Good? away back thar—
If y' knew o' the load
'Et a man must bear
Who starts in the world
Like a sail half furled,
'Thout perfession ur trade:—
Hev ye heard the sound that
is sometimes made
By the wind in the trees
when the leaves is wet?
If ye have, I'll bet
The whole o' my kit
That ye can't fergit
How it kind o' softened yer heart
an' set
Yer mind on the days o' the
apple bloom
An' the woods an' the brook an'
the partridge boom,
An' the wild strawberry hid deep in
the grass,—

What's that! did my elbow push
that glass
To the floor?
Let it lie
I
Ain't usin' the stuff no more.
D'ye hear!
No, keep your talk.
Let's walk,
An' you may introduce me to your
work,
Me, Jim Burke.
The same's
From this time for'ard t' be called James.

LESLIE E. KEELEY.

Close reef that name, each added title trim,
What matter titles to a man like him!
The thing he did and not the words he said
Will move a world to weep him when he's dead.

THE BATTERED OLD GRIP

[Respectfully dedicated to Mr. Brenton R. Wells.]

Dear comrade, once bright as the silk of the corn,
Now shrunken and wrinkled, a subject of scorn,
Its trappings, once brilliant, now tarnished and scaled,
The key long since lost and every clasp failed,
Its sides fallen inward in gaunt hungry way,
Its rich russet color, dull, faded and gray;
Yet down through the aisles of my memory trip
A troop of bright fancies at sight of my "grip."

Preparing to start on a journey, how oft
I have taken it down from its place in the loft,
Spread it wide at my feet with its back to the floor,
With the thought—Will it hold all my things as before?
Friends tried often prove quite as cruel as kind,
For words like to thistle-down drift with the wind;

But here's a companion ne'er gave me the slip—
Always faithful and willing, my battered old
"grip."

First a half-dozen shirts seem to fill up each side,
Yet kerchiefs a dozen, scarfs tied and untied,
Pipe, razor and strop, cuffs, collars and gloves,
With a score of small knick-knacks tossed into the
grooves;
A clothes brush, pomade, a picture or two
Of a dear little lassie to look at when blue,
And mayhap a small phial containing a "nip."
All snugly pack into the battered old grip.

The great ocean steamer, with cabin and hold,
Hangs the sign out at last "no more here enrolled,"
The street-car capacity's something immense—
May sometime refuse you a place for your pence;
E'en the venerable stage, despite legend and lore,
Not always can proffer the "room for one more,"
Yet truth has deserted the heart and the lip
Of him who should say, "no more room in the
'grip'."

And down, as I grasp it, sweet memories drift

Through th' channels of thought—and its worn
form I lift
With a reverent touch while I think, with a sigh,
Of the many dear treasures, in days are gone by,
That have lain in its pockets and hid in its depths—
A mother's admonishings, father's precepts,
And others with token from maiden's pure lip,
Read over and over,—held place in the "grip."

Though my hair is beginning to silver, I feel
A rapturous youthfulness over me steal
As I gaze at these dingy old covers and think,
In my first manhood days, how I stood on the
brink
Of life's speeding river, and dreamed of and plann'd
A home just the neatest and best in the land,
Where a sweet face should greet me, returned from
each trip,
With a welcoming smile for myself and the "grip."

God bless every stitch in the shrunken old leather
That's borne me in safety through all kinds of
weather
To this island of peace which I now so enjoy,
With my dear little wife, my girl and my boy!

God bless it, I say, and in palace or cot,
In wealth or in poverty—whate'er my lot—
Though Fate from my savings all other things strip,
I'll cling to you ever, dear battered old "grip."

THE OLDEST O' THEM ALL

You may see him any evening sitting just outside
the door
Of a pretty rural cottage that the vines have clam-
bered o'er,
And the pink and cherry blossoms slyly peep about
him there,
Like so many fairies playing hide-and-seek behind
his chair.
He's a lean and slippered figure and his step is far
from light,
There are furrows in his forehead and his hair is
snowy white
And his cheeks, like aged parchment, yellow, wrink-
led, worn and grim—
Yet not a drummer of them all but doffs the hat to
him.

He can sing (his voice will quaver) songs forgotten
long ago

By the present generation, songs our fathers used
to know.
And their rhythm quaint reminds you of a brook
and falling leaves,
And a maple-shadowed cottage with the swallows
'neath the eaves.
Then he'll tell you of adventures that will thrill
your heart with fear,
Or recount a world of stories you will laugh for
hours to hear,
While his eyes anew will sparkle 'neath his hat's
extended rim—
There's not a drummer in the land but yields the
palm to him.

How his withered form will straighten as he "reck-
ons" in his day
"Thar wusn't many ov um," when he felt inclin'd
that way,
"Wi' the peart and smilin' lassies" that he met
along the "raout,"
If he chose to show his samples "as could lay th'
old man aout."
He will call to mind the stage-coach with its flyers,
six or more,

"Faster than y're modern engines wi' their smoke
an' dust an' roar
Sweepin' roun' the yawnin' canyons faster than the
swallows skim"—
Oh! not a drummer in the land but doffs the hat to
him.

As evening shadows lengthen, if the breeze is blow-
ing fair,
From beneath his faded jacket he will take with
tender care,
A locket, worn and dented, wherein, framed in curls
of gold,
Is a face that to the "oldest" never, never will be
old,
And his aged eyes grow softer and more tremulous
his tone
While he tells you how since Anna died he's made
the trip alone,—
And ere the tale's concluded other eyes than his are
dim—
There's not a drummer but is proud to doff the hat
to him.

Half the sayings of a century, safe hidden in his
breast,

Come forward at his bidding, in the quaintest language drest;
And he takes such pleasure in them that 'twould really be a crime,
Not to listen and applaud them, though 'tis for the hundredth time.
He's afloat upon life's ocean like a ship without a mast,
All his blessings in the future, all his pleasure in the past,
Let us thank him for this lesson, 'tis not strength of mind or limb,
But a cheerful sunny spirit wins the hearts of all to him.

The sun of life is sinking on the evening of his day,
And his gentle spirit will ere long from earth have passed away;
We shall miss the well-known figure from its seat beside the door,
And the oldest trav'ler of them all will cheer our hearts no more;
But a hundred thousand brothers still his memory will keep,

While children laugh, or manhood strives, or broken households weep;
And oft on blustering winter nights, about the cheering flame,
Will heads be bowed and speech be hushed at mention of his name.

THE END.

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